

Preliminary planning is being done in Catawba County to design a countywide thoroughfare plan. This includes a proposal to construct a new alignment for US 321 that would depart from the existing routing of this major road in Lincoln County and carry traffic along a new alignment some three to four miles west of town.\*

It is recommended that Maiden support the idea of relocating US 321. The Maiden Planning Board has suggested that this proposed rerouting be brought to within one to two miles of Maiden -- which it is felt would encourage use of it as a direct commuter route from points north and south. (In the case of the initial proposal, Maiden workers from Lincolnton and Lincoln County would be more likely to continue to use the present US 321 route south, rather than driving west as much as four or five miles, then heading south.) This suggestion has been transmitted to the project engineers involved with the Catawba County Thoroughfare Plan. This US 321 location is still, of course, only a proposal -- it must have the support of Catawba County officials and the North Carolina State Highway Commission before it can become a reality (along with the necessary funds for its construction). Improvement of this major highway has already taken place, however, in South Carolina and in southern North Carolina. Maiden and Catawba County should be concerned with the progress of this project, based on local traffic counts taken on this road (5,450 vehicles per day in 1966 and 6,700 vehicles per day in 1967 in downtown Maiden). If traffic continues to increase as it has in recent years, one-way traffic or complete removal of parking in downtown Maiden will be necessary within the next three to five years. (This assumption is based on continued traffic increase and "practical capacity" figures suggested by the Advance Planning Department of the N.C. Highway Commission for roads such as Maiden's Main Street.)

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\*Source: Advance Planning Department N.C. State Highway Commission, Raleigh, N. C.